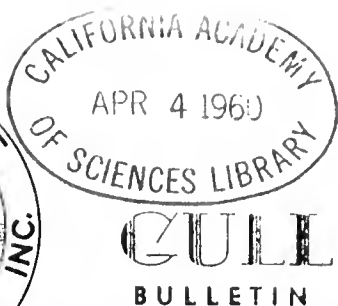


THE
MONTHLY



Volume 42

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Number 4

FEBRUARY TRIP TO RITCHIE RANCH AND AREAS WEST OF LODI

On Saturday and Sunday, February 13 and 14, two separate trips were made to the area around Thornton in San Joaquin County, with 43 birders taking part during the two days. About 1200 Sandhill Cranes were seen along Woodbridge Road, which borders on the Ritchie Ranch. Next, we visited an area not covered on previous trips along the Bean Ranch Road. Here, in a large flooded tract about 2 miles north of Thornton, there was a great concentration of waterfowl. We estimated that there were 3,000 Whistling Swans, 2,800 Canada Geese, 4,600 White-fronted Geese, and 16,000 Snow Geese. About 100 Green-winged Teal, 200 Shovelers, and 5 Wood Ducks were also seen. The weather was cool and clear so binoculars and telescopes were very effective. A side trip to Courtland netted 6 Long-eared Owls in a conifer on the banks of the Sacramento River, thanks to the alertness of Guy McCaskie.

The Saturday group counted 76 species and the Sunday group 55, for an over-all count of 80 species, as follows: White Pelican; Common Egret; Green Heron; Canada, White-fronted, and Snow Geese; Mallard; Pintail; Green-winged Teal; Shoveler; American Widgeon; Wood Duck; Canvasback; Lesser Scaup; Ruddy Duck; Turkey Vulture; White-tailed Kite; Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Marsh, and Sparrow Hawk; California Quail; Ring-necked Pheasant; Sandhill Crane; Common Gallinule; American Coot; Killdeer; Long-billed Curlew; Greater Yellowlegs; Least Sandpiper; Dunlin; Long-billed Dowitcher; Herring, California, Ring-billed, and Mew Gull; Rock and Mourning Dove; Burrowing and Long-eared Owl; Red-shafted Flicker; Acorn Woodpecker; Black and Say's Phoebe; Horned Lark; Tree Swallow; Scrub Jay; Common Crow; Plain Titmouse; Common Bushtit; Wrentit; Bewick's and Long-billed Marsh Wren; Mockingbird; Robin; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Water Pipit; Cedar Waxwing; Loggerhead Shrike; Starling; Orange-crowned and Audubon's Warbler; House Sparrow; Western Meadowlark; Redwinged, Tricolored, and Brewer's Blackbird; Brown-headed Cowbird; House Finch; Lesser Goldfinch; Rufous-sided and Brown Towhee; Savannah and Lark Sparrow; Oregon Junco; White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox, and Song Sparrow.

Some of the Saturday group returned via the Yolo Causeway and Davis. East of Davis, they saw Burrowing Owl, Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl, Nuttall's Woodpecker, and a Rough-legged Hawk.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Leader and Historian—Sat.*
PHIL SMITH, *Leader and Historian—Sun.*

FEBRUARY TRIP TO FLEISHHACKER ZOO AND LAKE MERCED

On Saturday, February 27, about 25 members and friends birded at the zoo and Lake Merced. This trip is not a spectacular one; but it is always enjoyable, rather leisurely, and with shifting views of a large and lovely lake right in San Francisco. On this particular day the air was crisp, but not uncomfortably cold—and so clear that the Farallon Islands stood sharply up from the sea. One highlight of the trip was seeing, from one spot on the fishing bridge, all 5 grebes together. It was especially interesting to compare at close range the Red-necked, Western, and Horned. The second highlight was an exceptionally good look at a male White-winged Scoter, in superb plumage, on the still water of the lake, and near where we were standing. We often only glimpse this bird bobbing up and down on the ocean waves, so we were glad to have a chance to study him.

We are always reluctant to count water birds seen on the zoo grounds, because we are not sure they are not pinioned. The following list of 46 species observed during the day, therefore, does not include the White Pelican, Canada Goose, White-fronts, or the Snow Geese that were on the pond just inside the zoo: Red-necked (1), Horned, Eared, Western, and Pied-billed Grebe; Green Heron (3); Mallard; American Widgeon; Canvasback; Lesser Scaup; Bufflehead; White-winged Scoter; Ruddy Duck; Hooded Merganser (1); Red-tailed and Sparrow Hawk; American Coot; Glaucous-winged, Western, Herring, California, Ring-billed, Mew, and Bonaparte's Gull; Anna's and Allen's Hummingbird; Red-shafted Flicker; Black Phoebe; Tree Swallow; Long-billed Marsh Wren; Robin; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Water Pipit; Audubon's Warbler; Yellowthroat; House Sparrow; Redwinged and Brewer's Blackbird; House Finch; Pine Siskin; Oregon Junco; White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox, and Song Sparrow.

AILEEN PIERSON, *Leader and Historian*

JANUARY TRIP TO RICHARDSON BAY AND MARIN PENINSULA

On the cold and foggy morning of Saturday, January 30, about 50 people met for a day of birding in Marin County. At the small lagoon north of DeSilva's Island we had Canvasbacks and Pintails, American Widgeon, Shovelers, and Coots. From there, we drove to the end of the paved road on the east shore of Strawberry Point, then walked for two hours along the muddy road and wind-swept shore, where we had an unusual flotilla of 25 Red-breasted Mergansers at close range, several loons, a Spotted Sandpiper and 10 Great Blue Herons on the breakwater, along with 6 species of gulls. Very amusing were 10 Harbor Seals, whose sad-eyed heads seemed to be floating disembodied on the water.

We next drove to the Rose Verral Wildlife Sanctuary of Richardson Bay where we were greeted by the Audubon warden, John O. Larson, Jr. It was noon, and the white fog over the bay was lifting. . . . sun and blue skies were with us. We gathered on the stone terrace for lunch, with coffee and homemade cookies graciously served by the Larsons. Mr. Larson gave a short talk on the history of the Victorian house, restored by Mrs. Donald Dickey, and on the acquisition of the 600 acres of submerged land. He said, too, that 500 children had visited the refuge since November 1959, under the Junior Audubon conservation program, and that the water-bird population of the refuge ranges from 4,000 to 25,000 individuals. That day he estimated 22,000 birds were out on the bay before us.

In the early afternoon we drove south along Tiburon Peninsula to Belvedere Island. Beautiful flocks of White-winged Scoters flew by; and we saw hundreds of Western Grebes, Bufflehead, American Goldeneye, and Scaup. At Paradise Cove clouds of sandpipers were banking. From there we went to San Quentin Point, McNears Beach, and then to China Camp where we saw Spotted Sandpipers and Willets.

Probably the most outstanding observation of the entire trip was the great concentration of water birds on Richardson and San Pablo bays with high numbers of Canvasbacks, and the low numbers of Pintails.

The following 71 species were recorded on the trip: Common and Arctic Loon; Horned, Eared, and Western Grebe; Double-crested Cormorant; Great Blue Heron; Common and Snowy Egret; Pintail; Shoveler; American Widgeon; Canvasback; Greater and Lesser Scaup; Common Goldeneye; Bufflehead; Ruddy Duck; White-winged and Surf Scoter; Red-breasted Merganser; Turkey Vulture; Red-tailed, Marsh, and Sparrow Hawk; California Quail; American Coot; Killdeer; Black-bellied Plover; Long-billed Curlew; Spotted Sandpiper (4); Willet; Least Sandpiper; Dunlin; Western Sandpiper; Glaucous-winged, Western, Herring, California, Ring-billed, and Mew Gull; Mourning Dove; Anna's Hummingbird; Belted Kingfisher; Red-shafted Flicker; Black and Say's Phoebe; Scrub Jay; Common Crow; Common Bushtit; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Wrentit; Bewick's Wren; Robin; Hermit Thrush; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Water Pipit; Cedar Waxwing; Loggerhead Shrike; Audubon's Warbler; Western Meadowlark; Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbird; House Finch; Rufous-sided Towhee; Savannah Sparrow; Oregon Junco; White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox, and Song Sparrow.

ELIZABETH S. LENNON, *Leader and Historian*

THE CONSERVATION FRONT: OUR VANISHING SEASHORE

Another rude jolt to the complacency of Northern Californians who love the seashore comes with the news that PG&E has been granted a use permit for a power plant on Bodega Head. This occurs in spite of the fact that this area was included in both State Division of Beaches and Parks and Sonoma County master plans. Besides being rich in both history and archeology, . . . it is also one of the significant biological areas on the Pacific Coast, and warrants preservation from that standpoint alone.

But there is still much that can be saved. So let's get behind the Pt. Reyes National Seashore Foundation and help to preserve this still beautiful area from subdivision, industry or unrestricted business. There will be a hearing in San Francisco April 14th on bills affecting Pt. Reyes—S.2428 introduced by Senator Clair Engle and H.R. 8358 by Rep. Clem Miller. This hearing will be conducted by Sen. Frank Moss of Utah, and will probably be held at Nourse Auditorium (Old High School of Commerce). Verbal testimonials or letters are needed for this date. Further information may be secured from the Foundation, Box 366, Kentfield.

It appears urgent to secure future access rights to one or two good tidepool areas on the San Mateo coast. Students and teachers need tidepools, in which to snoop and collect. Tidepools, marshes and natural fresh water streams and ponds are getting mighty rare hereabouts! Let's not lose these priceless outdoor labs.

But meanwhile—keep your eyes on Washington and Sacramento, too.

WHERE IS THAT WILDERNESS BILL? Will the Division of Beaches and parks find money to safeguard the Bull Creek redwoods, and carry out other pledged projects? Tune in again next month—we may have some answers!

PAUL F. COVEL, *Conservation Chairman*

ANNOUNCEMENT: A membership roster of the Golden Gate Audubon Society has been completed. Copies may be obtained at one dollar each from our President Mrs. Roberta Long, 45 Claredon Ave., San Francisco 14. Our thanks to Mrs. Long and her committee for their work in compiling this directory.

SANCTUARY AND MEMORIAL FUND

This fund was established December 4, 1956 for the purchase, maintenance or assistance of sanctuaries. It is steadily growing due to the many generous gifts by members in memory of deceased relatives and friends. The Society's donation of the entire Garden Tour proceeds in 1958 was a very welcome addition. At present the amount in the fund is \$2299.95. The subject of sanctuaries has many aspects and it is planned to have articles concerning them in *The Gull*.

DR. ALBERT BOLES, *Chairman*

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following members to the Golden Gate Audubon Society: from Berkeley, Mrs. Hedwig S. Jenny, Mrs. C. F. Reeves, Mrs. Paul Smiley; from Midpines, Dr. Virginia Fahlee; from Oakland, Miss Doris E. Kelly; from San Francisco, Mr. & Mrs. R. G. Follis and Mrs. V. Koppel.

AGNES OCZKEWECZ, *Membership Chairman*

SUMMER CAMPS FOR AUDUBONITES

AUDUBON CAMP OF CALIFORNIA. Applications are now being taken at headquarters, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. Camp is in session for five two-week periods beginning June 19. Here is your chance for an unforgettable experience in the out-of-doors, combining fun and learning. After June 16 send applications to Audubon Camp, Norden, California. Scholarships for the Audubon camp are available. The Golden Gate Audubon Society is giving five one-half scholarships. For details on qualifications and application for scholarships, call or write Mrs. Jean Nelson, 8183 Terrace Drive, El Cerrito, LA, 6-8075.

ALASKAN WILDERNESS CAMP. Camp Denali, a wilderness resort in the McKinley park region of Alaska, is offering three special sessions this summer that may be of interest to Club members. The Wilderness Workshop, June 20-30, is set up along the line of Audubon camps, to explore and study the nature lore of the arctic-alpine tundra. Tundra Treks, Aug. 10-22, will attract those interested in hiking the back country of McKinley Park and the adjacent Kantishna region from comfortable base camps along the McKinley Park road. The Shutter Safari is designed for the serious wildlife photographer who wants to record the spectacular animal and bird life along with the mountain scenery for which McKinley Park is famous. For brochure and other information write Camp Denali, Box 526, College, Alaska.

SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL SCIENCE. The Idylwild School of Conservation and Natural Science in the San Jacinto Mountains south of Riverside is offering a program designed for teachers, group leaders and laymen interested in the problems of the use of the natural resources, conser-

vation education, and better use of the out-of-doors. The school is headed by Dr. Donald Shipley and Dr. Charles Burch of Long Beach State College. The courses include "Birds of the San Jacinto Mountains" (2 units optional) July 18-29 and the "Wilderness Workshop" (1 unit optional) June 12-17 and July 30-Aug. 5. Other courses in Conservation, Field Natural History, and San Jacinto Plants are offered during this summer season. The Workshop includes a pack trip (by horse) to a Wilderness Area. For more information write Idyllwild Arts Foundation, Idyllwild, California.

SCOOP!! Lois Crisler, author of "Arctic Wild" will talk on "Wolves of the Arctic Tundra" on Wednesday, May 11 in the Berkeley Little Theatre under the auspices of the G.G.A.S. Tickets at \$1.50 are available from Mrs. Beth Snyder 571 Dwight Place, Berkeley.

ANOTHER SCOOP!! Roger T. Peterson's new guide, "A Field Guide to the Birds of Texas" is now available. This book is a "must" for anyone traveling to Texas. The book is available through the Texas Game and Fish Department, Austin 14, Texas as well as at Audubon Headquarters, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, at a cost of \$3.00.

NATURE CONSERVANCY IN NEED

The Nature Conservancy, which is pioneering in a new kind of conservation project, is in need of donations. The Conservancy is in the process of paying for a 3,000 acre preserve of wilderness in California's northern Mendocino County. This magnificent tract, which lies on the South fork of the Eel River is the last of its kind available for preservation. This area, the watershed of Elder Creek, is virtually intact from ridge to ridge, holding the last large stand of virgin Douglas Fir forest.

The status of this area, when established, will be an inviolate refuge for the countless plants and animals native to this region. The Preserve's program, guided by a committee of ecological scientists, will be a model for the management of undistributed natural land. Recent articles in magazines have featured the Nature Conservancy and the Preserve: (*Reader's Digest*), January 1960, "Save a Spot of Beauty for America"; and *Pacific Discovery*, March-April 1960, "To Keep This Forest Primeval").

At the present date about \$25,000 of the necessary \$125,000 has been raised, and another payment is due in May. A contribution of \$33 will save for posterity one acre of this priceless land, but of course greater or lesser amounts are also welcomed. For further information about this project write to Mr. William Drake, Western Regional Director, Natural Conservancy, 1711 Grove Street, Berkeley 9, California.

JOHN MUIR OPEN HOUSE

The John Muir Memorial Association's annual Open House at the John Muir home, 440 Alhambra in Martinez, is scheduled for the week-end beginning Friday, April 22nd from 2 to 4 o'clock on Friday and Saturday and from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday.

On Sunday, April 24th, a special Memorial Program has been planned beginning at 2 o'clock in the outdoor area of Muir Manor. Mr. Aubrey Neasham, State Historian will speak on the importance of John Muir and the historical value of his home to California. On Saturday, April 23rd the annual Sierra Club hike will start at Muir Manor at 9:00 a.m. The six-mile hike is open to

anyone interested. A fee of \$1.00 will be collected at the home to help pay maintenance and restoration.

ANNUAL CONVENTION REPORT

The following is first in a series of articles giving the highlights of the Audubon Society's 55th convention in November 1959 in New York. A brief summary of the convention appeared in the February 1960 Gull, but we feel that this information should be passed on in more detail . . . The Editors!

OIL POLLUTION. This lecture was mainly concerned with the pollution on the east coast of the United States and Canada. For over 30 years pollution has occurred off the coast of Newfoundland where it has been noted that 15 tons of oil will cover eight square miles of water accounting for hundreds of birds. Often these slicks, caused by tankers, drift for hundreds of miles before they break up on a shore. Even if the oil slick breaks up early in its "life", research into the subject has shown that a spot of oil the size of a quarter can easily kill a bird. On the Pacific Coast the main incidence of this pollution has been illegal discharge of bilges of ships entering into harbors. It was the opinion of investigating scientists that there is absolutely no way in which the oil can be safely dumped even at the 50 mile shore limit.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Delegate*

OBSERVATIONS AND FIELD NOTES

All members and friends of the Golden Gate Audubon Society are encouraged to contribute their sightings to *The Gull*. Observations should reach the editor by the 18th of the month if not before.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS and **EGRETS** are present in much smaller numbers this winter than is normal. Waterfowl in general and **PINTAIL** and **MALLARD** specifically took a nose dive in numbers as they went down 22% from last year in California (Eugene Kridler). Sutter Refuge reports a **BLUE GOOSE** around the first of March (EK). **EUROPEAN WIDGEON** in many spots, including: Lake Merritt (Lee Stallcup); Willows, where, "as many as six in one day" were present (EK, Guy McCaskie); and Aquatic Park, Berkeley. **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** were seen at Moss Landing and at the mouth of the Carmel River on March 12-13. The male **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** was still present at the Palo Alto Yacht Club at press time (Earl Albertson), and also one was seen on Feb. 3 at Belvedere Island (Stan Picher *et al.*). The **WHITE-WINGED** and **COMMON SCOTERS** are present in much above normal numbers this winter according to many observers. "Up to a hundred" **KNOTS** were seen during January and into February at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza (Ed Willis). Some are still there as are others at Moss Landing and Bay Farm Island. Nine **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** were sighted on March 6 and 11 near the Dunbarton Bridge on Jarvis Road (Howard L. Cogswell, Richard Stallcup). **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES** were present on March 13 at Point Pinos, and at Fort Point in San Francisco on Feb. 9 (Roberta J. Long). A female **YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER** showed up at Mills College on March 1, 5 and 7 with "no evidence of hybridization" (HLC). **WESTERN FLYCATCHERS** were reported at Moss Landing March 13 and at St Mary's College on March 19 (Junea W. Kelly), both dates being somewhat early. A **PHAINOPEPLA** was another early date at St. Mary's on

March 19 (JWK). A minor invasion of NORTHERN SHRIKES hit California this winter with several in the Central Valley and one on Feb. 6. in Castro Valley (RS). Over 350 Cowbirds in El Cerrito were reported roosting from Jan. 17-Feb. 29, an unusual number (A. Laurence Curl).

APRIL MEETING

The 506th regular meeting of the Golden Gate Audubon Society will be held in San Francisco on Thursday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Josephine Randall Junior Museum on Roosevelt Way at 16th St. (No. 43 bus on Market St. at 14th.).

Bert Harwell will be the speaker. He is well known to most Audubonites for his expert Nature photography and his ability to imitate calls. His charming personality endears him to everyone. He will show one or more of his colored motion pictures. A most interesting evening is assured. Come, and bring friends.

Note: Plan to come a little early and browse in the museum. Stay a little late and enjoy the refreshments.

BONNIE SMITH, *Program Chairman*

FIELD TRIPS FOR APRIL

On Sunday, April 3, to the Farallon Islands. See full announcement in the March Gull. Fare is \$8.50 per person. Contact Harold G. Peterson (Lockhaven 8-7534). Black-footed Albatross, California Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Marble Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet, Rhinoceros Auklet, Sooty Shearwater, and Tufted Puffin are very good possibilities. Leader, EARL ALBERTSON, Davenport 2-7421.

On Sunday, April 10, to Bay Farm Island. Shorebirds in their spring plumage should be abundant. The spring migration is usually at its height during this week. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at High Street and Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda. The earlier meeting will give more time for scouting for Burrowing Owl and Clapper Rail along Frontage Road. After Frontage the pools along Doolittle Drive, McCartney Road and the sunken ships will be covered. The Alameda South Shore development has created some new territories which will be visited. Leader, ELSIE ROEMER, LA. 2-0941.

On Saturday, April 23 to McCoy Ranch, Arroyo Mocho, southwest of Livermore. Few places so close can equal the pastoral beauty of this foothill canyon in the springtime. Orioles, Phainopepla, Western Kingbird, Yellow-billed Magpie and many other birds are usually seen. Meet in Livermore, one block down Livermore Avenue beyond the flagpole, at 9:30 a.m. Allow one hour driving time from Oakland.

On Sunday April 24, the McCoy Ranch trip will be duplicated. This is being done to split the group for better birding. Leader, Saturday, CARYLE SATHER, Phone PLaza 6-0581, and Sunday, ERLINE HEVEL, PROspect 5-6498.

On Saturday April 30, the "Birding by Ear" study will be made. Several of the members have suggested the McDonald Trail in Grass Valley Regional Park. Best results can be had by assembling before daybreak. The sunrise on that day is 6:04 DST, and the trip will last until noon. Assemble on McDonald Trail and Redwood Road which is about ¼ mile west of the south entrance to

Redwood Park at 5:30 a.m. Leader, HAROLD G. PETERSON, LO. 8-7534.

On Sunday, May 1, to Jack London Ranch, Glen Ellen, Sonoma County. This is now the home of Mrs. Marianne Shepard, a Sierra Club member who has again invited us to visit there. All who were on last year's trip will remember its wooded slopes covered with oaks, conifers and shrubs, an ideal habitat for birds. At this season the rolling meadows will be covered with wildflowers. There is a small lake on the ranch. Meet at 9 a.m., at Glen Ellen post office, which is about one mile from Highway 12, seven miles from Sonoma and 15 miles from Santa Rosa. Bring lunch, binoculars, telescopes and interested friends. Leaders, MARIANNE AND SUSAN SHEPARD, Box 141, Glen Ellen.

FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE MEETING

Your ideas and suggestions are needed to give the society a good field trips program. On Thursday, April 21, 7:30 to 10:00., there will be a meeting of the committee at the library in the Rotary Science Center, Lakeside Park, Oakland. On Thursday, April 28, 8:00 to 9:30 p.m., a meeting of the San Francisco members of the committee will be held at the apartment of Aileen Pierson, 810 Gonzales Drive, Apt. 12A. Purpose of these meetings is to round out the balance of this year's field trips program. All interested persons are invited to attend.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Field Trips Chairman*

NOTE: Sat. and Sun. May 14 & 15, overnight—should be corrected to read Flower trip to the Santa Lucias instead of the Santa Ritas.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Established January 25, 1917

A Branch of the National Audubon Society since 1948

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Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint Membership, Local and National, \$6.50 per year, includes AUDUBON MAGAZINE and THE GULL. Subscription to THE GULL separately, \$1.50 per year.

Visit the Pacific Coast Office of the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY — 2426 Bancroft Way
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